

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 6 are pending in the present application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3 and 6 have each been amended and claims 2 and 4 have been canceled. No new matter has been added. It is respectfully submitted that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated June 16, 2004.

Examiner Interview:

The courtesies extended by Examiner Park and Supervisory Patent Examiner Coles during the personal Examiner Interview conducted on September 23, 2004 are gratefully appreciated. The substance of such interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

As To The Merits:

As to the merits of this case, the Examiner maintains the following rejections:

- 1) claims 1, 2 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Garr et al. (of record); and
- 2) claims 3, 4, and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Garr et al. in view of Sekizawa et al. (of record).

Each of these rejections is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1 and 3:

Claim 1, as amended, now calls for a controller for judging whether each component should be replaced when said total print copy number is equal to or greater than said corresponding subsequent replacement schedule copy number of each component, wherein, when one of the components is replaced, the subsequent replacement schedule copy number for said component as stored in said non-volatile memory is updated to a value obtained by adding a lifespan copy number previously determined for said component to the total print copy number at the time of replacement.

That is, claim 1 has been amended to include the features of canceled claim 2 as well as clarify when each component should be replaced.

For example, as discussed on pages 15 and 17 of the present specification with reference to Figs. 6, 7a – 7f, when the “Total Print Number Count 1” is equal to said corresponding subsequent replacement schedule copy number “TC Replacement Schedule Copy Number 1,” see Fig. 7D, (i.e., if the “Total Print Number Count 1” is equal to “Y” or 30,000)) the controller 100 judges that the toner cartridge should be replaced and a toner cartridge replacement indicator is displayed on the operating panel.

Further, when the toner cartridge is actually replaced, see Fig. 7e, the Total Print Number Count 1 at the time of replacement “ $Y + \alpha$ ” is added to the replacement schedule copy number “Y” for the toner cartridge and the resulting value “ $Y + \alpha + Y$ ” is overwritten as the subsequent replacement schedule copy number (i.e., if the toner cartridge is exchanged at 30,100 copies,

$Y=30,000$ and $\alpha=100$, then $30,100, (Y + \alpha) + 30,000, (Y) = 60,100, (Y + \alpha + Y)$). Thereupon, when the total printed copy number reaches 60,100, the lifespan of the toner cartridge is judged to be expired.

It is respectfully submitted that it was **agreed** to during the September 23, 2004 personal interview that the Garr et al. reference does not appear to teach the limitations specified in claims 2 and 4, which have now been incorporated into claims 1 and 3, respectively. More specifically, Garr is absent any teachings concerning when one of the components is replaced, the subsequent replacement schedule copy number for said component as stored in said non-volatile memory is updated to a value obtained by adding a lifespan copy number previously determined for said component to the total print copy number at the time of replacement, as now called for in claim 1.

Claim 3 as amended now calls for a controller for judging whether each component should be replaced when said total printing time is equal to or greater than said corresponding subsequent replacement schedule time period of each component, wherein, when one of the components is replaced, the subsequent replacement schedule time period for said component as stored in said non-volatile memory is updated to a value obtained by adding a lifespan time period previously determined for said component to the total printing time at the time of replacement.

For example, as discussed on page 22 of the present specification, the scheduled replacement time is obtained by adding a lifespan time period previously determined for each component, to the total printing time at the point of replacement.

As discussed above, it was **agreed** to during the September 23, 2004 personal interview that the Garr et al. reference does not appear to teach the limitations specified in claims 2 and 4, which have now been incorporated into claims 1 and 3, respectively.

As such, it is submitted that the applied references of Garr and Sekizawa each fail to disclose this feature of claim 3 concerning when one of the components is replaced, the subsequent replacement schedule time period for said component as stored in said non-volatile memory is updated to a value obtained by adding a lifespan time period previously determined for said component to the total printing time at the time of replacement.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

Response under 37 C.F.R. §1.116
Attorney Docket No. 001168
Serial No. 09/667,714

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TEB', is written over the firm name.

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